

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1635

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 1512

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, US

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT DAOUD

REF: (A) STATE 41045, (B) KABUL 1186

1. SUMMARY: IN OUR CONVERSATION ON MARCH 5, PRESIDENT DAOUD HAD NOTHING BUT FAVORABLE COMMENTS TO MAKE ABOUT THE PRINCIPAL DIRECTIONS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. REGARDING AFGHANISTAN, HE STRESSED HIS NATIONALIST, NON-ALIGNED POSITION. HE SAID HE WOULD VISIT MOSCOW FOR 2-3 DAYS THE END OF MARCH OR EARLY APRIL. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT DAOUD RECEIVED ME THE MORNING OF MARCH 5. HE WAS ATTENDED BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ABDULLAH AND FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL GHAUS. I BEGAN THE CONVERSATION BY ONCE AGAIN CONGRATULATING HIM ON HIS RECENT ELECTION AND ON THE NEW AFGHAN CONSTITUTION. HE SAID HE IS TIRED AFTER FORTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE BUT INTENDS TO DO HIS BEST FOR HIS COUNTRY AS LONG AS HIS HEALTH PERMITS. HE SEEMED BOTH HEALTHY AND VIGOROUS.

3. I THAN GAVE HIM A PRECIS OF THE PRINCIPAL FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS AND INITIATIVES OF OUR NEW ADMINISTRATION AND FOLLOWED BY GOING THROUGH THE TALKING POINTS IN PARA 3(B) OF CONFIDENTIAL

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REF B. REGARDING NARCOTICS, I ADDED THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A STATEMENT DELINEATING PRECISELY WHAT THE AFGHAN GOVT WILL DO THIS YEAR TO CONTROL THE PRODUCTION OF OPIUM POPPIES.

4. IN A LENGTHY RESPONSE, DAOUD BEGAN BY PRAISING THE EFFORTS BEING MADE BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO PROMOTE PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS OF PROBLEMS LIKE THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

AND TO REACH NEW AGREEMENTS ON ARMS CONTROL. HE SAID THAT PEACE IS ESSENTIAL FOR AFGHANISTAN IN ORDER FOR IT TO PROGRESS. BUT HE QUICKLY ADDED THAT "HONOR" IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN PEACE AND THAT AFGHANISTAN WOULD FIGHT IF NECESSARY FOR ITS INDEPENDENCE AND WOULD NEVER ACCEPT DICTATION FROM ANYONE. TO ILLUSTRATE THE LATTER POINT, HE TOLD ME IN CONFIDENCE THAT THE SOVIETS HAD AT ONE TIME TRIED TO DISSUADE HIM FROM SENDING AFGHAN MILITARY OFFICERS FOR TRAINING TO INDIA BUT THAT HE HAD TOLD THE SOVIETS THAT THIS WAS NONE OF THEIR BUSINESS.

5. DAOUD SAID THAT HE IS MOST PLEASED WITH AFGHAN-U.S. RELATIONS, ADDING THAT DURING THE PAST THREE AND ONE-HALF YEARS, WE HAVE REACHED A HIGHLY SATISFACTORY HIGHER LEVEL OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. HE SAID THAT AFGHAN-SOVIET RELATIONS ARE GOOD AND THAT HE PLANS TO VISIT MOSCOW IN RESPONSE TO A SOVIET INVITATION FOR 2-3 DAYS AT THE END OF MARCH OR EARLY APRIL. HE SAID THAT HE HAS BEEN SO BUSY RECENTLY THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS, AND OF COURSE THE PAK ELECTIONS HAVE NOT PERMITTED FURTHER PROGRESS IN PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS. HE SAID THAT AFGHAN-CHINESE RELATIONS ARE GOOD AND GETTING BETTER.

6. REGARDING NARCOTICS, DAOUD SAID THAT IN HIS OPINION IT WOULD BE A RELATIVELY MINOR MATTER FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ASSIST IN A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN BADAKHSHAN. REGARDING U.S.-AFGHAN COOPERATION IN THE NARCOTICS FIELD, HE SAID THAT AFTER HIS NEW CABINET HAS TAKEN OFFICE, INTENSIVE STUDIES WOULD BE MADE TO DETERMINE IN WHAT AREAS THE AFGHAN GOVT WOULD LIKE AMERICAN ASSISTANCE.

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7. DAOUD MADE NO COMMENT REGARDING OUR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, BUT I DID GIVE HIM A PAPER SUMMARIZING THE STATUS OF PRESENT AND POTENTIAL PROJECTS (COPY POUCHED TO NEA). HE ALSO DID NOT COMMENT WHEN I INFORMED HIM THAT WE HAD ASKED THE CONGRESS FOR SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE FY 1978 MILITARY ASSISTANCE TRAINING PROGRAM (PER STATE 44414). I TOLD HIM THAT IF THE CONGRESS APPROVES AND IF HIS GOVT DESIRES SUCH ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE, OUR MAP TRAINING PROGRAM COULD BE DOUBLED NEXT YEAR.

8. THE ENTIRE CONVERSATION WAS MOST CORDIAL, WITH DAOUD SEVERAL TIMES INDICATING HIS DESIRE FOR CLOSE US-AFGHAN RELATIONS. HE SHOWED HIS VIGOR SPECIALLY WHEN EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO AFGHAN HONOR AND INDEPENDENCE. HE LOOKED AS HEALTHY AS I HAVE EVER SEEN HIM.  
ELIOT

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